

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, GH

SUBJ: DOCTOR STRIKE AGAIN; GOG WITHDRAWS LEGAL STATUS OF
PROFESSIONAL BODIES

REF: ACCRA 5104

1. SUMMARY: MEDICAL DOCTORS IN ACCRA HAVE AGAIN GONE ON STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF PROFESSIONALS' ATTEMPTS TO BRING DOWN ACHEAMPONG GOVERNMENT. DOCTORS ELSEWHERE APE REPORTEDLY READY TO JOIN THEM. RETALIATING, GOG HAS REPEALED PROFESSIONAL BODIES REGISTRATION DECREE TO REMOVE LEGAL SANCTION FROM ASSOCIATIONS SUPPORTING STRIKE AND WARNED THAT AS POLITICAL PARTIES ARE STILL ILLEGAL, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CANNOT BE USED FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. POSITIONS OF BOTH GOG AND OPPOSITION GROUPS APPEAR TO BE HARDENING. END SUMMARY

2. ACCRA BRANCH OF GHANA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DECIDED JULY 6 TO "WITHDRAW SERVICES" AGAIN, JOINING LAWYERS, ACCOUNTANTS AND PHARMACISTS IN ATTEMPT TO TOPPLE ACHEAMPONG GOVERNMENT. THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT NURSES MAY SOON JOIN THEM.

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3. IMMEDIATE GOG REACTION WAS TO REPEAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES REGISTRATION DECREE OF 1973, TO REMOVE ANY BASIS FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST ANY MEMBER OF A PROFESSIONAL BODY WHO REFUSES TO JOIN STRIKE. THIS MEANS, ACCORDING TO CASTLE STATEMENT, "THAT ANYBODY BELONGING TO ANY OF THE PROFESSIONAL BODIES WHO IS WILLING TO WORK WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO DO SO WITH FULL

PROTECTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT."

4. IN FURTHER STATEMENT GOG WARNED THAT BAN ON POLITICAL PARTIES REMAINS IN EFFECT. STATEMENT SAID THIS MEANS "THAT IT IS ILLEGAL FOR ANY ASSOCIATION OR GROUP OF PERSONS TO USE THE ASSOCIATION OR SUCH A GROUP FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES TO INCITE OR ORGANIZE OTHER ASSOCIATIONS TO EMBARK ON ILLEGAL STRIKES TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL ENDS." STATEMENT ADDS GOG WILL "TAKE PROMPT AND APPROPRIATE ACTION" WHERE BAN IS CONTRAVENED BUT WILL "RECEIVED AND CONSIDER ANY GRIEVANCES OR COMPLAINTS" THAT SUCH GROUPS OR ASSOCIATIONS MAY HAVE.

5. EXPLAINING REPEAL OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES ASSOCIATION DECREE, GOG STATEMENT SAID EXECUTIVE OF ASSOCIATION MET WITH A GOG REPRESENTATIVE JULY 5 AND PROMISED TO SUBMIT SEPARATE MEMORANDUMS ON PROFESSIONAL PROBLEMS AND "PROBLEMS RELATING TO POLITICS" BUT THAT NO MEMORANDUMS HAD BEEN SUBMITTED. STATEMENT ALSO CLAIMED EXECUTIVE HAD GIVEN ASSURANCE THAT MEMBERS' SERVICES WOULD NOT BE WITHDRAWN. SINCE GREATER ACCRA BRANCH OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATION SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAW SERVICES, IT "OBVIOUS THAT THERE IS NO PROPER CONTROL OF THE ASSOCIATION AND THAT THE EVENTS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE SO FAR ARE BEING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STIRRED UP BY SPLINTER GROUPS WITHIN THE ASSOCIATION FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL ENDS."

6. IN JULY 7 EDITORIAL COMMENT GOVT-OWNED DAILY GRAPHIC APPEALED TO PROFESSIONALS "WHO DO NOT FEEL INCLINED TO JOIN THE STRIKE TO GO AHEAD AND WORK WITH THE PROMISE OF FULL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION." RECOGNIZING THE AREA OF CONCERN INVOLVED, EDITORIAL RECALLS THAT GOG HAS ANNOUNCED STEPS TOWARD RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT "AND FROM ALL INDICATIONS THE GOVERNMENT IS SINCERE ABOUT IT."

7. COMMENT: ONLY ACCRA BRANCH OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HAS THUS FAR OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED STRIKE ACTION BUT IT IS RUMORED THAT THE ACTION IS MUCH BROADER, EMBRACING DOCTORS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. WE ALSO HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS OF THE ARREST OF A LAWYER, A SURVEYOR AND POSSIBLY TWO DOCTORS IN CONNECTION WITH THE STRIKE. ALTHOUGH THE TONE OF STATEMENTS THUS FAR, PARTICULARLY THE GRAPHIC EDITORIAL, SEEMS RELATIVELY CONCILIATORY, THERE IS GROWING CONCERN

IN ACCRA THAT THE POSITIONS OF BOTH THE GOG AND THE
STILL-DISORGANIZED OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE HARDENING.
ADDING TO ACHEAMPONG'S WOES WAS ANOTHER NATIONAWIDE
POWER OUTAGE FROM AKOSOMBO DAM EVENING JULY 6
WHICH DID SERIOUS DAMAGE TO VOLTA ALUMINIUM CO
(VALCO) OPERATION (SEPTTEL).
SMITH

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